

TO: TRIBAL ENHANCEMENT BIOLOGISTS/HATCHERY MANAGERS

FROM: BRUCE STEWART, SENIOR FISH PATHOLOGIST

DATE: OCTOBER 22, 1998

SUBJECT: FISH HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR TRANSFERRING ADULT SALMON OR STEELHEAD BETWEEN WATERSHEDS

One of the areas that we did not thoroughly address in the 1998 revision to the Co-Managers' Salmonid Disease Control Policy (Co-Managers' Disease Policy) was the transfer of live or dead adult salmon or steelhead within or between watersheds. This oversight became apparent last Fall when the Co-Managers' fish health staffs were asked to provide comments on the fish health risks involved with transferring adult carcasses within or between watersheds for nutrient supplementation purposes. After close scrutiny of the Co-Managers' Disease Policy, we realized that it did not specifically address this type of activity. Our concern was that planting of adult carcasses could pose a fish health risk to the resource if left unregulated. To resolve this problem, the Co-Managers' technical staffs developed a set of guidelines that laid out the fish health requirements that would have to be satisfied before adult carcasses could be planted. These guidelines went into effect last November.

This year we find ourselves in a similar situation with recent proposals by the state to transfer live hatchery surplus adult salmon and steelhead to lakes and ponds outside their watershed to supplement recreational fishing opportunities for non-tribal fishers. This activity, like the adult carcass plants last year, is not specifically addressed in the revised Co-Manager Disease Policy. Our concern with the transfer of live adults between watersheds is that it can pose a significant fish health risk to the resource if not properly regulated. I recently met with Kevin Amos, the WDFW Fish Health Division Manager, to see if we could agree on some general guidelines that would be consistent with those developed last Fall for transferring adult carcasses. Below is a summary of what we came up with:

- I. **Transfers of live or dead adult salmon or steelhead within their original watershed:**
 - A. **Notification:** Notification of a within watershed transfer would not be required unless there has been a detection of a viral pathogen (IHNV, IPNV, or VHSV) or the *Myxobolus cerebralis* parasite within the past three years. Notifications are to be done as specified in the Co-Managers' Disease Policy.
 - B. **Testing Required:** Testing of 60 broodstock for viral pathogens.

- C. **Transfers:** Transfers can proceed before the above test are completed. However, if a reportable pathogen is detected, transfers must stop until all relevant co-managers are notified and agree that additional plantings pose no additional risk.

II. **Transfers of live or dead adult salmon or steelhead between watersheds but within the same fish health management zone.**

- A. **Notification:** Requires the standard five (5) day notification period to relevant co-managers before the transfer can proceed as per the current policy. Notification of all relevant Co-Managers is required for all of these transfers regardless of the broodstock test results or pathogen history.
- B. **Testing Required:** Testing of 150 broodstock for viral pathogens.
- C. **Transfers:** No transfers can be done between watersheds until the test are completed.
- D. **Exception: Transfer of live adult coho salmon between watersheds but within fish health management zones to a landlocked lake that either drains directly into saltwater or has no outlet:**
 - 1. **Notification:** Requires the same type of notification as listed in II. A. above. In addition, it will be the responsibility of the initiator of the notification to provide a detailed description of the lake or pond and its outlet if pertinent.
 - 2. **Testing:** Testing of 60 broodstock for viral pathogens.
 - 3. **Transfers:** Transfers can proceed before the above test are completed. However, if a reportable pathogen is detected, transfers must stop until all relevant co-managers are notified and agree that additional plantings pose no additional risk
 - 4. **Rationale:** We feel that this type of transfer poses a low fish health risk because of the following factors:
 - a) Species involved: coho are relatively resistant to infection by IHN and IPN viruses and or *Myxobolus cerebralis*, the causative agent of whirling disease
 - b) Disease History: We would only be moving from watersheds that have a three year clean history of reportable pathogens,
 - c) Containment: Landlocked lakes within the same fish health management zone with no outlet afford us the ability to contain a problem in the unlikely event that one occurs.

III. **Transfers of live or dead adult salmon or steelhead between fish health management zones:**

- A. **Not allowed.**

Our intent in developing these guidelines is to bring some level of consistency to how the State and Tribes are treating transfers of either live or dead adult salmon throughout western Washington. My hope is that we will be able to incorporate these guidelines into the Co-Managers' Disease policy sometime in the future. In the meantime, I hope that they can provide some guidance to you during your review of proposed transfers in your area. If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call at 360-438-1181 (Ext. 338).

cc: Kevin Amos (WDFW)
Ray Brunson (USFWS)
Tribal Fish Health Staff